

EDUCATION AFTER THE WAR.

A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO A MEMBER OF

THE SOUTHERN EDUCATIONAL CONVENTION.

COLUMBIA, S. C., 28TH APRIL, 1863.

BY EDWARD S. JOYNES, A. M.,
PROFESSOR OF GREEK LITERATURE IN WILLIAM AND MARY COLLEGE, VA.

[Published in the Southern Literary Messenger, and re-printed for the
use of the Convention.]

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N O T E.

The following paper, originally designed for a more elaborate essay, which circumstances at the time rendered it impossible to complete, was made by the friend to whom, in its present form, it was addressed, without design of publication, the property of the Southern Educational Convention, and is now printed in aid of the objects of that body. It has been thought best, however, to leave it in its original form, with none other than a few verbal alterations.

RICHMOND, JULY 1, 1863.

EDUCATION AFTER THE WAR.

RICHMOND, APRIL 20, 1863.

WILLIE J. PALMER, Esq., *Raleigh, N. C.*

MY DEAR SIR—I have observed, with much interest, a call published in the papers for a Convention of Teachers, to be held at Columbia, on the 28th inst., and with additional pleasure, I have observed your name published among those prominently engaged in promoting this undertaking. Though debarred by imperative official duties from taking personal part with you on this occasion, I cannot deny myself the opportunity of assuring you of my hearty sympathy, and my earnest interest in the success of the enterprise, which I deem to be one of greatest importance at the present time. Upon myself, professionally, as well as in every other relation, the hand of war has fallen heavily, robbing me not only of my "occupation," but of all its materials, my books and notes, and with them, of all my professional plans for the future, so far as I can now anticipate; but it has not robbed me of my professional sympathies, nor of my aspirations for the cause of Education and Letters in the South, even though I myself may be denied, henceforth, the part which I had so ardently hoped to play in the programme. You, (whom, though known but for a few days, I may already, I hope, call a friend, and of whose sympathy in all that tends to advance the great work in which we *were* co-laborers, I am well assured,) will pardon me for addressing you a few thoughts in connection with this subject, which I hope your larger experience and better opportunities may make in some degree available, in connection with the objects of the proposed Convention, which I take it for granted you will attend.

Next, indeed, to the war itself, in which are staked our existence and our liberties, there is scarcely any subject of such momentous importance as that, which, if I understand your object aright, you propose to consider in this Convention; and after the war, though now for the time forgotten, it will require the gravest public consideration, equally with the most vital questions of Government and Politics; for it will involve, in no small degree, the future character and history of

the people, who, through so fearful an ordeal, will have gained their independence. When this war shall end; through what phases it may yet pass; in what precise attitude it may leave our country, in regard to many questions of momentous interest; cannot yet be determined; but this at least may be said, that in many respects, affecting the most vital interests of society, and in particular, the moral elements of Education and its most essential machinery, "old things will have passed away, and all things will have become new." A profound change will have been impressed upon the character and the associations of our people. Rising from the throes of a mighty revolution, a once peaceful agricultural people will have become one of the most military on the face of the earth. (I do not speak of actual, or political, results, which are, I trust, in safe hands, but simply of the moral and educational aspects of the question.) A large proportion of every community will have been themselves just released from military service. In almost every household, in every neighborhood, will be a soldier, full of the impulses and associations of military life. Around every fireside will be recounted, with the freshness and force of personal recollections, the incidents and stories of the war. Its spirit, and even its passions, will be cherished, in proud and unsading memory, by the living generation, and the minds of the young, ever most susceptible to the stories of heroism or of suffering, and alive to all martial impulses, will be imbued, through a thousand channels, irresistibly with its influence. Even assuming that for generations to come, no other war should disturb our land, yet for generations to come, would this war, apart from its material results, but as a moral power alone, exert a deep and controlling influence in determining the dispositions and sentiments of our children, and the character of our people.

Such a revolution cannot pass in the history of any people, without deeply affecting the character, not only of the living, but of future generations, and manifesting its influence for ages to come, in all the relations of social and domestic, as well as political, life. What the nature of this influence will be, in its moral aspects, it is important to inquire in advance; an inquiry, which in the midst of the overwhelming interests and passions of the existing crisis, would be unheeded by the general public, but which it behooves those, who, being the professed Educators of the people, are the appointed Cultivators and Guardians of those moral influences, which form and impress the character of the young, carefully to consider; and which, unless *they anticipate*, will be but too late regarded by other men. The proposed Convention, in which teachers from all parts of the country will be

assembled in conference, seems to me to afford an opportune occasion for the consideration of this question, and for the interchange of such views, and the discussion and determination of such principles of education, as shall prepare teachers to meet in their sphere, not the least important, the momentous duties of the present and coming age. To this end, I respectfully propose to offer, for your consideration, a few thoughts, which your own experience may, I trust, make practically useful.

That the moral results of the war will be, in the main, good, we may confidently anticipate, without doubt or fear. Trials are not in vain, either to individuals or to nations. That our Confederate Union, hallowed by so much blood, will be endeared and cemented by the recollection of common sacrifices and triumphs; that our independence, achieved in fact as well as in name, through the very bitterness of our foes, and the providential neglect of professed neutrals, will rest therefore upon the firmer basis; that our national character will be more than ever impressed with the distinctive traits of Southern superiority; that the noble qualities which this war has called forth, in men and in women, in the soldier and in the citizen; the courage; the fortitude; the heroism; the self-sacrifice; the constancy; the endurance; will have become the glory and the inspiring tradition of our people, which succeeding generations will cherish and emulate with never-failing pride; that an immense impulse will have been given to intellectual activity, in every direction, opening the way to rapid progress in every department of enterprise and inquiry, and stimulating the development of all the resources, the wealth, and the intelligence of the country; these are some of the results of our War of Independence, which we may with confidence anticipate, and which it is needless here to enlarge upon. Herein the Teacher, as well as the Statesman and the Philosopher, may find ample food for hope; for new fields will be open to his labor; new materials will be richly presented to his hand; and new and peculiar impulses will co-operate with his work, should he know how to use them aright.

But not altogether will the effects of the war be thus beneficial and ennobling. Would it were so! War, which arouses so many fierce passions in the breasts of men, which breaks up so many homes, unsettles so many institutions, disturbs so greatly the habits, associations, and occupations of individuals, and produces such vast changes in government and in society, in public and private life, leaves behind it also a restless and feverish excitement, and in many cases, a disposition to idleness and dissipation, not only unfriendly to education, but

dangerous both to private morals and to public virtue. Such has been the history of all wars; and so we have already seen it in this. How many characters, hitherto deemed firm in the principles of morality, and even of religion, have been wrecked during this war! How many men, heretofore grave, sober, studious, and regular in life, have lost their habits of mind, and even their powers of exertion, in the restless excitement of the times! The occupations and the interests of the war absorb all others (save those of gain!) That man must possess indeed rare powers of self-abstraction, who can long concentrate his attention upon any subject, or occupation of mind, not immediately connected with the war; and it may be truly said, that the boy, who studies now anything else, must be "either more or less *than boy.*" I may appeal for this fact, to the experience of every teacher, in every school. These evils, so apparent already, and so wide-spread, will be immeasurably increased both in society, and in their influence upon the young, when our young men return home from the army, and released from the restraints of military discipline, come back to civil life, in too many cases unprepared for its vocations, and unsettled in their habits, by the restless life of war.

Another effect of war, more remote indeed, but perhaps still more permanently dangerous to education and morals, is that it leads to *materialism*, both practical and speculative. In this statement, there is nothing in derogation of the noble and unselfish qualities which war calls forth, in individuals and in communities, to which we have already alluded, as so honorable, and so hopeful in the present case; but an evident fact, which reflection and history alike corroborate. War exalts physical force. The vast physical machinery which it sets in motion; the vast physical enterprises which it necessitates, in the maintenance, the equipment, and the movements of armies; the necessity which it imposes, of developing and *utilizing* all the physical and natural resources of the country and of the people; the glory which it attaches to physical triumphs over whatever obstacles, of the enemy or of nature; all this tends powerfully to project the energies of a people into purely physical and utilitarian channels. And as this is the *necessity* of war, so it continues to be one of its necessary consequences upon the succeeding age. Physical triumphs, material progress, utilitarian pursuits, are exalted in the minds of the people, and especially of the young, often at the sacrifice of moral restraints, and all the interests and institutions of religion, morality, literature, and education, are depreciated in proportion. The greatest enemy of these is the spirit of utilitarianism; in proof of which, so far as education is concerned,

I need only cite the familiar fact, known to every Professor, that ever heretofore, in the United States, both North and South, it has been almost impossible to attain a high standard of scholarship, even in our best colleges, because it was impossible to induce students, generally, to look beyond *immediate practical results*, as the end of education, or to restrain long enough their impatient desire to enter upon the arena of "practical" life. For this reason, save in the physical sciences and in the practical professions, America has shown so few men of profound attainments; and from this same cause, in great part, that superficiality and unsteadiness, which has ever been the characteristic of American civilization at the North, and from which only the conservative institution of slavery has, in some measure, saved us at the South. Nearly allied to this *practical utilitarianism* is that *materialism* in opinion and philosophy, so fatally contagious, and so dangerous to religion, morality, education, and all the best interests of society, both temporal and spiritual. This connection need not be enlarged upon, nor does it require any argument to shew that all these perils, in increased degree, lie in the track of war.

These *positive* influences will find an important *negative* adjunct, in our case, in the actual condition of things, which the war will leave existing in our country;—in the disturbed condition of society, especially in certain districts; in the unsettled habits and associations, and often the unsettled opinions and principles of individuals; in the passion for gain which this war seems only to have aggravated, and which peace will stimulate by increased temptations; in the competition and speculation incident to trade, awaked to new life, and rushing into untried channels; in the pressing necessity for physical and utilitarian enterprise, to repair the damages of war, and develop the material resources of the country; in the actual absence of many of the institutions and much of the machinery of religion, literature, education, which the war will have broken up and destroyed; in the sundering and destruction by war, in so many cases, of the ties and sacred restraints of home—parents—family—property. These simple circumstances, briefly mentioned, but most significant in themselves, are only some among those which will tend to aggravate the dangers which we have mentioned, as attendant and consequent upon war.

How shall these dangers be met? With what *counter influences* shall they be corrected?

These are many, and full of hope. The naturally conservative and virtuous character of our people; the joy with which most of them, especially those who are men of family, will return to the pursuits of

peace, and the increased pleasure which, by contrast, they will find in the associations of home; our wise, free and conservative government; the conservative and humanizing institution of domestic slavery, and the stability of agricultural interests; the influence of religion, and of active piety in the churches; the high tone of public sentiment and morals, naturally characteristic of the Southern people; national honor and state pride; enlightened public opinion; wise legislation; the freedom and virtue of the press;—these are patent and potent agencies, in whose restraining and effective power, with the aid of time, we may place a hopeful confidence. And in such alone lie the safety and the future glory of our country.

But not the least of these agencies, and that one with which *we* have chiefly to do, is that of EDUCATION; I mean a *right* and *wise education*, which, taking hold of the youth, shall rightly form the *MAN*, and lay the foundation in the present age, of the features, intellectual and moral, which shall characterise the next.

To consider the nature and elements of this education, and to prepare in advance its means and practical materials, now so sadly lacking, for future use, is an object not only most important in itself, but specially opportune to the present crisis. It is all the more important, all the more opportune to *us*, because forgotten for the time, by the mass of men, like so many other subjects of enduring interest, in the excitement of passing events. But it will recur with the return of peace, a want more deeply felt than ever. Now therefore, while war is spreading its dire distraction throughout the land, and aggravating the sources of idleness and temptation to the young, it becomes the peculiar duty of teachers—whom our laws, for this purpose, have exempted from military service—to consider these questions in advance, and while our brave brothers in arms are doing battle for their liberties and ours, to provide for their children the means of right education, and for our country an additional bulwark of liberty and peace hereafter.

Such I take to be the practical and worthy object of your convention; and to this end, feeling the deepest interest in your labors, I propose to address to you, for your consideration, a few suggestions. I confine myself wholly to practical observations, extended discussion of any of the points presented being alike impossible under my present engagements, and foreign to my present purpose. You will take them for what they are worth, and whether you agree with them or not, you will, I am sure, at least appreciate their *motive*.

In the first place, and as the preparation for all the rest, let teachers themselves endeavor to impress themselves, and each other, when thus

assembled in council, with just and elevated views of their own profession. Let them seek rightly to estimate, in its moral and patriotic aspects, their great responsibility, and their present great opportunity. Let them, not in personal pride, but in that pride of profession, which, by elevating the standard of personal effort, is most consistent with the true humility of the individual, realize the great part which it is theirs to play, if they are wise, in the history of our country ; and by mutual encouragement, and the inspiration of the loftiest aims, let them endeavor, while thus assembled, to found and inspire, in themselves and each other, a just *esprit du corps*, a deep sense of professional duty, a lofty professional pride, and the highest standards of professional ambition and distinction. To this end, as the basis of this professional sympathy and the starting point of their united efforts, let them seek to find among themselves a high and common ground of co-operation, elevated above all differences and prejudices, upon which all may stand ; and upon this basis, let them discuss and determine the essential nature of true education, and establish the right principles of all instruction, as the common law and bond of their profession.

Let them, then, adopt as their fundamental principle, the great truth, that the true nature and end of all education, apart from the acquisition of the simple and necessary *elements* of knowledge, is **DISCIPLINE** ; —that it consists, not in the amount of information, nor in the number or kind of subjects acquired, but in the *discipline*, that is, in the training and culture, not only of the mind, by the right development of its faculties, but also of the *will*, and of all the intellectual and moral powers of manhood ; and that the impulses, the means, and the restraints, by which this *discipline* can be attained, must ever constitute the *great inquiry*, and when discovered, the *universal law* of all education, in whatever sphere. Adopting this principle, they will have found a high and common ground, upon which all may meet, and an object the realization of which may unite all their efforts and inquiries. Standing upon this ground, at once high and broad, because both simple and philosophical, they may lay aside, for the first at least, all disputing about the relative merits of different systems and subjects of instruction, and in acknowledgment and pursuit of a common object, leave each, in the liberty of a perfect law, to work out this object in his own way, according to his own circumstances. For though some subjects of study may be better adapted to afford this discipline than others, yet by the application of *right methods*, it may be imparted even with the simplest elements of knowledge, and the humblest school-master.

by the right use of his spelling-book, may claim fellowship and peerage, in this exalted labor, with the most learned professor.

Adopting this principle as the common rule and standard of their profession, teachers will at once agree in discarding all empirical systems of instruction, the "short cuts to knowledge," the "few and easy lessons," with all that superficial clap-trap of effect and show, which have been the bane of Yankee text-books, and through them, thus far, also of Southern schools. They will remember that *method, thoroughness, exactness*, are the characteristics of the only knowledge which can be called education, and that these characteristics, thus alone, by conscientious and severe discipline, impressed upon the *mind*, will be reflected upon the *heart*, and help to form the wise, the conservative, the conscientious citizen;—that without these, mere "useful knowledge," commonly so called, is rather a dangerous than a useful acquisition, and cannot be made practically fruitful of noble ends; and thus, with a consciousness not less of patriotic than of professional duty, they will at once direct their efforts to the encouragement of such text-books, and such modes of teaching, as shall best realize this idea, and combine in the highest degree these characteristics.

And though upon this common ground of union, all differences and prejudices may be laid aside, yet it is only upon this ground, that teachers will find a common basis for profitable discussion.

Agreeing in this fundamental principle, they may then safely and successfully inquire, what subjects, and what modes of study and instruction, are best calculated to afford this discipline, in its most severe and varied forms; and by the results of this inquiry they will direct their own efforts and example in the conduct of their schools. Such discussion, conducted in the right spirit, would be full of profitable instruction to teachers themselves, and will, I hope, engage no small part of the labors of the Convention. I merely suggest it for consideration and for inquiry, both now and hereafter, venturing, however, the opinion,—which I will not further discuss,—that the elements required will be found to consist pre-eminently in a few and simple subjects, such as are indeed within the reach of all schools, and that the reduction of the *number of classes*, in most, if not all, of our institutions, would materially contribute to the promotion of right education.

From this stand-point of union and of effort, let the Convention at once address itself to the practical wants of the existing crisis. Let teachers resolve, as a patriotic duty, to keep up their schools, with whatever reduced numbers, as a nucleus for the future, and to continue in themselves, so far as possible, the pursuits and habits of mind,

appropriate to their profession, the necessity of which our laws have recognised. Let them consider the actual existing wants of Education in the South, and set about devising means for encouraging the preparation of the necessary text books by Southern Authors,—especially *Elementary Text Books*, which are the most important, and for which we have been so slavishly, and so much to our cost, thus far, dependent upon the North. (The more advanced text books, of purely classical or scientific character, not being so essential, may be drawn for the present from European sources, or left to individual leisure to supply hereafter.)

Let them then make a careful review of the whole field of School Education, and having ascertained what books, or classes of books, are wanted, prepare a digested list, and publish it in circular form, appealing to Southern teachers, scholars and publishers, to supply the want. Let them forbear to prescribe any particular forms or systems, or to designate any particular individuals for particular works, as I regret to say I have heard was anticipated in some quarters. Any such action would not only be unjust in itself, but would be a public wrong, by forestalling that free competition from which alone the best results are to be expected; and by offending the public sense, would rather injure, than benefit, even the system and the individuals, however superior, in whose behalf they might so pronounce. Let them rather seek to encourage general effort, and to open the widest range of competition, the wider the better. Let them lay down the simple principle, that *simplicity of conception, thoroughness of method, and fidelity in execution*, shall be the criteria which they recommend, and will adopt, leaving all the rest to individual genius, and to their own wise discrimination hereafter. Let them then ensure the promise of suitable encouragement and rewards to such authorship, by pledging themselves, individually and as a body, as soon as practicable, to select among such productions, for their own use and adoption, not surrendering the right of individual choice, nor using any unfriendly influence against others; but at all events to encourage the works of *Southern authors* and *Southern publishers*, and especially to discard, at ~~the~~ and forever, as badges of a hated slavery, all *Northern text books* and *Northern teachers*, at whatever expense; and to this end, solemnly pledge to each other, and to the country, their mutual and united co-operation.

A great and patriotic work is thus presented to the Convention. The occasion is opportune; the need is great and pressing. The moral influence of such an assembly, if wisely thrown in the right direction,

will be fruitful of good at this time. And their call would not be in vain. It would give practical encouragement, direction, and shape, to the efforts already making; and the Southern people, so fruitful in resources, often where least expected, once made aware of their wants, in this kind, would not leave them long unsupplied. A better class of text books, than we have ever had, would soon be ready for our schools; a richer field would be open to our teachers; a purer, healthier food would be prepared for the minds of our children; and a firmer foundation be laid for Southern literature, for public education, and for public virtue. Let your Convention see that it realizes this opportunity, and wisely prepares this abundant harvest.

Another, and most important subject of consideration, proper to a Convention like the present, and at the present time, to which I can merely allude, is, the *Protection of Education against the influences and consequences of the War*, such as those to which allusion has been made heretofore. Not only is education one of the most important of those conservative influences, above named, to which the country must look for its future safety and liberty, but it will, *itself*, need all its own Conservatism to protect itself against direct consequences of the war, and against influences and modifications, in consequence, unfriendly to its spirit, and fatal to its power. Such are, for example; the indisposition to restraint and discipline, which the war will have left in the minds of the young; the contempt for learning; the confirmed idleness; the false ambition; and the more than ever restless fever for active life; against which teachers will have to contend. But more powerful still, and more dangerous, because not confined to the young; the false views of education which will have been engendered in the public mind; the passion for *military schools*, to the prejudice of others; the desire—already foreshadowed—to incorporate the "*military feature*" upon every school and college, pregnant with evil, both to the school and to the State, and wholly unfriendly, both to all right education, and to all literary aspiration; the extreme predilection for the so called *practical* studies, to the exclusion of those that are more purely intellectual and moral, and therefore better fitted for purposes of discipline and culture; the aversion to slow and laborious education, in every department; the distaste for literature; the discredit of literary pursuits and honors, in comparison with military or practical achievements, and thus the still greater diversion of all ambition among the young to these objects, in disregard of the motives to intellectual discipline, and to the injury of all educational and literary pursuits and institutions;—these are some of the influences, unfortunately too obvi-

ously imminent, to which I refer. How shall they be guarded against in advance, and met hereafter, both in our schools, and on the arena of public opinion? By what means our schools and colleges shall be protected, and the public mind warned and guarded against these pernicious influences, and the enduring interests of education, of literature, of civilization, of morals, of religion itself, shall be preserved, and their purity and power held unimpaired, for the safety and the glory of our country in the coming ages—is a question of the deepest, the gravest, the most immediate and universal interest! I merely mention it for consideration, and as a topic for future thought and inquiry, believing, that while, to some extent, those influences lie beyond our immediate reach, and can only be overcome with the lapse of time, and by concurrent moral agencies; yet that, in some measure also, it lies within the scope of Education itself timely to guard against, and successfully to resist them, in its own sphere, by its own agencies. I therefore earnestly suggest the inquiry, for the consideration of the Convention, and of teachers generally, both on the present occasion and hereafter. Any contribution to its solution would be a public benefit.

In view, then, of the coming time, both anticipating these dangers, and for the sake of the advantages which would otherwise ensue, I earnestly hope this Convention will take measures to perpetuate itself, upon a basis which will command universal sympathy and support, both among the profession and in the public estimation, as a National Institution for the encouragement of Education and Letters in the South. Such an institution, once established and acknowledged, would, in a country like ours, hold a great moral power, and would exert a vast influence, both conservative and progressive, upon all the interests of Education. Recognised as the representative of the combined intelligence of educated men from all parts of the country, the patron of no sect, or section, or interest, its standards would be acknowledged, its precedents respected, its influence felt, both by teachers and by the public; and wisely directed, its efforts might be powerful for the encouragement of genius, the promotion of literature, and the protection and advancement of education, and of all the intellectual and moral interests that are associated with or comprehended in it. The establishments of this kind in monarchial countries, so fruitful of good results known to the world, cannot be imitated in ours. We can only rely upon voluntary association and co-operation, and the gradual accumulations of time. But a foundation may at least be laid now. And there could be no more opportune season than this, at the very

beginning of our history, when our country is just taking her place among the nations, and her literature, her science, her distinctive intellectual character and productions, still await the plastic hand of the future. An institution of this kind, successfully established now, upon an elevated basis, and dating back to this heroic age of our early struggles, would possess a historic claim upon the future, which, if rightly maintained at first, would ensure its perpetuation and its influence hereafter. It will be only necessary that it shall give to itself a self-supporting, a national, and an acceptable character; propose to itself distinct, worthy, and patriotic objects of effort and encouragement; and establish itself upon a constitution alike permanent and flexible, alike elevated and free, with standards alike discriminating and equal, and with honors and rewards alike rare and accessible to all. I will not, however, enter into details upon this subject, for I have already trespassed beyond the limits of propriety, and I fear, of your own patience. I merely suggest the idea, the full realization of which will be, perhaps, better postponed to a future occasion, when a more general attendance may be secured, (which should be appointed, let me suggest in conclusion, within the period usually allotted to vacation.)

Apologizing for the length of this communication—written partly in the midst of business, and partly in sickness, (to which alone I owe the opportunity of completing it,) and wishing you and your brethren an agreeable and successful meeting, and an abundant reward of your labors, I remain,

Very respectfully and truly,

Your friend,

EDWARD S. JOYNES.



